



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### North Carolina Application #4920NC-1



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	43	43	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	14	14	

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

North Carolina's reform agenda is both comprehensive and coherent and based on an already existing agenda or mission for education improvement. The goals are simple, straightforward and related to all four of the ARRA education areas. The path is well described and well-organized to support statewide progress. It is noteworthy that all 115 Local Education Agencies ("LEAs"), the Chairs of the local school boards and all but one president of the local teachers' associations signed the MOUs and that all have committed to participate in all the initiatives that are relevant to their schools. The only potential issue raised is what happens if a newly-defined "lowest achieving school" is in one of the LEAs that did not agree to implement that part of the plan associated with turning around the lowest achieving schools. By virtue of 100% of LEAs being committed to participation in the RTTT program, it is exceedingly likely that their participation will translate to statewide impact in helping the state to reach all of its goals, which appear to be realistic. Because the elements of the plan fit into the already existing state reform agenda, it is assumed that the goals would continue were the state not to receive an award under this funding; however, this is not explicitly stated.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	15	15	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	

#### (A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

North Carolina plans to build off of strong leadership and a network of dedicated teams in each area of the RTTT application. Specific leaders, with relevant expertise, are aligned to the reform areas. The new regional model of coordination and provision of NCDPI services should be effective in providing support to LEAs. The inclusion of substantial focus on improving the statewide technology infrastructure will also enable the delivery of substantial supports to LEAs throughout the state. Administrative and operations support are well-documented. What is not as clear is how LEAs will be supported to understand and provide the substantial professional development that will be required for both teachers and leaders. The fact that there will be evaluation of all the initiatives will help in disseminating practices, but replication requires a substantial commitment of resources. So, too, plans for holding LEAs accountable for progress and performance are not specifically targeted in the plan. Each of the budget plans appears to be complete and well thought-out, and as best as can be seen at this early point, there seems to be a credible connection between the plan and the budget. Not only is there a broad range of stakeholder support provided in the



application, but the tone and content of most of the letters of support make clear both the inclusiveness of the process of developing the application and the real enthusiasm for it. In addition, many of the letters make clear that tangible support and collaboration will be forthcoming in the implementation of the plan.

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The State's presentation made clear that a broad range of leaders are not only committed to the thoughtful implementation of the plan, but very knowledgeable about the vision, the strategies and the steps to implementation. The presentation made clear where leadership for policy making and implementation reside and how the various groups charged with leadership and oversight are connected to each other. The presentation thus reaffirmed the strong capacity residing in the state for implementation of the plan.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18	18	

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The application provides specific evidence of the state's progress in each of the four areas, as well as an explanation of how the efforts have been funded, demonstrating commitment to use of state, federal, and grant funding. Specifically, North Carolina began to implement a plan almost two years ago to revise its standards, assessment and accountability. It describes how it has used various federal funds to support this work. North Carolina already has embarked upon the creation of a longitudinal data system and has used state funds to partner with the SAS Institute to make a new assessment system available to schools throughout the state. The state has recently required all teacher preparation programs to go through a revision process, provides scholarships to outstanding aspiring teachers and administrators, regularly administers a teacher working conditions survey and provides incentives to improve the quality of its teachers and leaders. And finally, there is a School Turnaround program which provides training, support and coaching to school leaders and teachers. North Carolina has made steady progress in increasing student outcomes, as demonstrated not only by local assessments but by NAEP as well (more significant growth in math than in reading, where in 8th grade there has been a decrease). NAEP data appear to suggest that there is a much greater difficulty in raising achievement levels in the middle school (8th grade) years. In addition, there has been a real struggle to decrease the achievement gaps. There are some areas for optimism, for example the early college program. However, it appears obvious that the increasing presence of limited English proficient students is a great challenge to schools in North Carolina.

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

As noted in the comments regarding Section D(5), the state's presentation made clear the seriousness of their commitment to improving the achievement of limited English proficient students. In addition, the presentation elucidated the many supports that are being targeted to improving the achievement and success of students with limited English proficiency.

<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>108</b>	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	



**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

North Carolina is participating (and playing a leadership role) in the Common Core Standards, which includes a majority (48) of states. North Carolina's schedule is a well thought out plan leading to adoption and use by August 2010.

**(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments**

10

10

10

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

North Carolina has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments by its participation in the American Diploma Project's Assessment Consortium, as well as its membership in three assessment consortia, all of which are focused on the development of summative, formative and interim assessments which are to be aligned with the Common Core standards and which are high quality (as defined in the notice). Two of the three consortia include a majority of states in the country.

**(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments**

20

15

16

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

North Carolina's plan to support the transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments is multi-dimensional, aligned with its specific goals, and well designed to accomplish its purposes. It is noteworthy that the plan begins with a communications plan (intended to reach all stakeholders, including parents, advocacy groups, and business and university partners, among others) and goes all the way to aligning high school exit criteria and college-entrance examination requirements. The plan effectively leverages the state's participation in consortia that will together develop some of the tools necessary for transition to and implementation of the standards and assessments and adds its own efforts to complete the plan. The development of a best practices guide for transition to a digital assessment system may need in-person support to ensure successful comprehension and use. The time line provided for implementation of the plan does not include any time beyond anticipated adoption of the standards, thus severely limiting the ability to know whether activities are occurring in a timely manner and limiting the ability to hold responsible parties accountable for tardy or non-delivery. In addition, it is unclear how meaningful (or how significant) the projected 8% annual increase in teachers' positive response to the survey about their experience implementing the new standards is since there is no base-line from which to calculate the 8% annual improvement.

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The state's presentation articulately described how the plan for delivering professional development to teachers to support the transition to standards and assessments is based on prior unsuccessful effort in which sufficient professional development was not provided, thus further strengthening the current plan described in the application. For example, the description of necessary professional development as in-person, on-line and job-embedded (mentor or coach support) is evidence of the likelihood that the professional development supporting the transition to a digital assessment system will in fact include the necessary in-person support.

Total

70

65

66

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	18	18	

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**



It appears that North Carolina is making solid progress in having an operational longitudinal data system with the America COMPETES Act elements. However, it is not clear from the narrative exactly which of the elements are actually in place. It appears that those elements fully in place are having a unique unidentifiable statewide student ID, student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information, student-level information about the points which students exit, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs, the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems, yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 111 of ESEA, information on students not tested by grade and subject, a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students, student-level transcript information, as well as data that provides other information necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in post-secondary education. The state's history of working on the creation of a state-wide longitudinal data system further suggests that additional efforts are in place, or will be addressed as part of the P-20 initiative, so that all elements should soon be in place.

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The presentation stated that all of the America COMPETES elements were in place except for Numbers 1, 8 and 10.

<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

While North Carolina evidently already has a robust system for producing reports based on various data, there is no evidence either of the data being provided to all stakeholders (e.g., community members, unions, researchers, policymakers) or of a plan to ensure that they all get access to data. In addition, there is no description of how the data is currently provided to, or will be provided to, decision makers to support continuous improvement of efforts.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
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**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

North Carolina has established goals and a process for providing what appear to be high quality local instructional improvement systems, and it appears that RTTT will speed up the implementation of the systems. What is not at all clear, however, is what the plan is other than creating the next generation of data capture and analysis systems. The application does not address how adoption, acquisition and use of the systems will occur, what the timing is, who will play what roles, etc. The description of what the data systems will do does not describe what the state will do to support the LEAs to provide effective professional development so that teachers and administrators have the ability to use the systems in furtherance of the very high quality goals. Rather, what is provided is a plan for what data and what systems will be provided and what goals for teaching the systems should enable. There is a statement that the state will reach a goal of making data available to researchers, but it appears to be more aspirational than an actual plan, as there are no details, time-line, or indication of whether members of the research community will be involved in determining how and what data should be provided.

<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**



The State has legal authority to allow alternative routes to certification for both teachers and administrators, and they are in use in several areas of the state. While routes to licensure for both teachers and administrators are not limited to Institutions of higher education, it appears that the most frequently used non-IHE route is direct licensure from the LEA. The use of New Leaders for New Schools indicates acceptance of a licensure program that meets all of the elements used to define alternative routes. Although the chart provided in Appendix 24 asserts that the alternative licensure programs meet all of the elements required by the act, there is no narrative or evidence provided to support an understanding of how any of the programs are actually selective or what kind of school-based experience and ongoing support are provided. North Carolina has an effective system for annual reporting of teacher and administrator shortage, disaggregated by subject area and LEA, as well as a broad-based plan with ten elements for helping to address the shortages.

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The description of the administrator licensure programs that will be put in place through the regional leadership academies makes clear that, even with flexibility for each academy to design its own program, the resulting licensure programs will meet the statutory definition of alternative routes to certification. Although a statement was made affirming that the alternative routes to certification for teachers also meet the statutory definition, there was no evidence presented to confirm this.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	13	13	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7	7	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

North Carolina already has a state-wide system by which all LEAs measure individual student growth. Although improvements are contemplated, no additional targets are necessary. North Carolina already has sophisticated teacher and principal evaluation systems, both that differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories. While the importance of student achievement is woven throughout the instruments, student growth measures are not yet incorporated directly into the evaluations. As a result, the state has created a thoughtful plan for incorporating the measures into both teacher and principal evaluation. The plan is cognizant of the complexity of the issue and the need for results. However, it appears that given all the complexities, the plan may be somewhat overambitious, especially considering the small amount of funding attached to it. In addition, a specific element of the plan that raises potential hurdles is not knowing what the results and recommendations of the Teacher Effectiveness Initiative study will be. Nonetheless, given that the Department of Education is committed to using student growth as a significant factor in evaluation, the state is in a good position to carry out the elements of the plan leading to the inclusion of student growth in evaluation by 2012-13. There was significant involvement of stakeholders including teachers and administrators in the development of the current evaluation systems; what is not clear is whether there is room for or contemplation of further involvement in the all-important phase of adding student growth to the evaluation systems. While there is a plan to conduct annual evaluations using the evaluation system that will include student growth as a significant factor, there is very little that speaks to the inclusion of the student growth data in the feedback, and how teachers and principals will be specifically supported to respond to it. It sounds like this will be part of the feedback, especially for those low achieving schools that are the first to receive support from the evaluation support team, but it is not clear. It also is not clear how principals will be supported to be able to provide this support for their teachers. The plan, with time-line and multiple steps for implementation and performance benchmarks, creates a clear picture of how the state will use the evaluations to inform decisions about developing principals and teachers, compensating, promoting and retaining teachers and principals, deciding whether to grant tenure (for teachers) and removing ineffective teachers and principals.



**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The presentation confirmed the state's deep understanding of the complexity of defining and measuring student growth, and of using it in teacher and principal evaluation, as well as the state's commitment to making it happen. In addition, the presentation stressed that the state's leaders understand the importance of providing support to administrators so that they are able to understand the process and support their teachers to work within the new system. However, there was no clarification or elucidation of how that support will be provided.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	12	12	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7	7	

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The performance measures provide data indicating that inequitable distribution of teachers and principals is a serious problem in North Carolina. Establishing regional supports, among others, responds to the recognition that teacher and principal effectiveness is not necessarily transferable across contexts. The multi-faceted plan to address the inequitable provision of teachers and principals is extensive and impressive. It also presumably has a likelihood of success because it does not rely upon one or two initiatives, but rather tackles the problem in different ways, with different types of resources and in ways that are context specific. Given the extent of the problem, and the many strategies, it will be important to monitor and evaluate the relative success of each of the initiatives. The application does not include specific goals for ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas; nor does it specifically tie initiatives to meeting the specific staffing needs. Some of the targets (e.g., for decreasing the number and percentage of ineffective principals leading high poverty and/or high minority schools) may not be realistic. There seems to be slow growth of effective leaders and much faster removal or improvement of ineffective leaders, raising a question about who will replace the ineffective leaders.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	
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**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

North Carolina is already well into the process of linking student data to in-state preparation programs and has a plan for furthering the work into areas where it is not yet complete, including independent educator preparation programs and an IHE report card. Based on its already existing sophisticated data linkage, the plan to complete the process has a high probability of success. North Carolina has an extensive array of initiatives to expand successful preparation and licensure programs; however, in some of the programs; because there are so many different initiatives, a high quality plan will include evaluation and assessment of the results. The strong statement of support for improving preparation within the UNC system is so far only a statement; it is evidence of an intention, but not yet a solid plan.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	
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**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The professional development plan intelligently initially focuses on activities aligned with the RTTT initiatives, but is not limited by the content of the initiatives. Therefore, there is a strong possibility that the regionally-based structure will be able to provide in-person and technological resources that respond to data and specific context. The plan to organize the professional development by the state but design and deliver it through the regional structure is responsive and well thought out. Although it depends in part on data



analysis and on individual school or LEA need, there is a strong likelihood that there will be a good mix of in-person, job-embedded and on-line professional development.

**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The presentation provided a great deal of clarity regarding the supports that will be provided to teachers (and aspiring teachers) around improving educational outcomes for students with limited English proficiency. The application speaks to how the diagnostic assessments, the content of professional development, and the community partnerships described elsewhere are intended to benefit directly the students with limited English proficiency.

Total	138	112	113	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state has the authority (and is obligated) to intervene directly in schools and LEAs.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	35	36	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	31	

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

North Carolina already identifies low achieving schools and now has an ambitious plan to identify persistently lowest achieving schools. In addition, North Carolina's plan raises the standard to identify more schools in subsequent years and to identify lowest achieving districts. North Carolina has intervened in many schools over the past several years, and has demonstrated the effectiveness of its intervention. North Carolina also presents evidence of having drawn lessons from each of the models it has made available for use in schools in intervention status. The state has been the recipient of significant support from private foundations to thoughtfully create options for turning around persistently lowest achieving schools, and has responded appropriately both to the support and to the judicially-imposed obligations to intervene in failing schools. North Carolina already has experience in models similar to the four school intervention models and demonstrates commitment to continuing to support Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in turning around schools using these models. It is clear that North Carolina has learned which models work better in which contexts (urban, rural, etc.) and, as a result, will likely work with LEAs and schools to select the model with the greatest chance of success. The plan makes clear that the infrastructure and supports already exist, based on the state's experience in supporting LEAs (in most cases, having the LEA manage the school with North Carolina New Schools Project ("NCNSP") as the transformation partner) to restart failing schools. However, it is not at all clear whether the state will be requiring identified schools to use one of school transformation models defined in the RTTT Application or whether they can continue to use the North Carolina models, which do not exactly align with the definitions in RTTT. If schools choose a model as defined in RTTT, there will be a need for the plan to address how the state and/or LEA obtains community support for a model that insists on an external partner—particularly since it appears that their own model with internal partners has been fairly successful.

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**



The state's presentation clarified that they are committed to using the four Race to the Top models for school turnaround.

Total	50	45	46	
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## F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	7	7	

### (F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

While the percentage of revenues dedicated to education increased in 2008-09 over 2007-08, significantly less was directed to the K-12 NC Public School Fund and significantly more was directed to Public Higher Education. (Without this increase, there would have been a significant reduction in both the amount and the percentage of revenue directed to public education.) North Carolina has some mechanisms to support equitable funding between high need and other LEAs, such as distributing position allotments, categorical allotments for specific groups of students, low-wealth supplemental funding, small county supplemental funding and disadvantaged student supplemental funding. However, there is no evidence presented as to whether the result actually is equitable funding. In addition, there do not seem to be policies that ensure that LEAs distribute funding equitably between high-poverty schools and other schools.

### (F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools

40

22

23

### (F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

North Carolina has a low cap (100) on the number of charter schools which translates to 3.8% of the total number of schools. However, North Carolina also permits an unlimited number of schools defined under the Innovative Education Initiatives Act. All 105 of these schools are high schools, and together with charters, they represent 8.1% of North Carolina's schools. There do not appear to be inhibiting restrictions on the charter schools themselves. Because North Carolina requires that charter schools adhere to the same accountability standards as are in place for traditional public schools, student achievement is a factor in charter schools' ability to remain in operation. While laws do not necessarily encourage the schools to serve student populations that are similar to local districts, the educational initiative schools must be targeted to at-risk students. The application states that the statutes and regulations are designed to ensure that charter schools receive proportionate funding, however, there is no evidence presented as to whether they actually do. Per student funding is delineated for charter schools, but not for traditional public schools. North Carolina does not impose facility-related requirements on charter schools; nor does it provide a funding stream for the charter schools. As described above, the Innovative Education Initiatives Act encourages the creation of early college and redesigned high schools; however, these do not appear to fit the definition of "innovative, autonomous school."

### (F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The state's presentation clarified that the same state funding formulas and allotments that are used for traditional schools as also used for charter schools. The presentation also clarified that the early college high schools meet all of the definitional requirements for innovative, autonomous schools.

### (F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions

5

3

3

### (F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The several additional reform conditions described do in fact support an environment of reforms and innovations that should (and in some cases, do) increase student achievement and graduation rates. In particular, the early childhood programs are seen as models, the NC School Improvement Project already appears to be showing great success, and all students who do not meet grade-level proficiency are eligible



for personal education plans. Incentives for National Board Certified Teachers have evidently been very successful in that NC has the highest number of NBC teachers in the country. However, no evidence is presented on the actual effectiveness of these teachers.

Total	55	32	33	
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### Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	

#### Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

North Carolina's STEM initiatives appear throughout the application and indicate a multi-pronged strategy to ensure that students graduate prepared for higher education and jobs in STEM fields, that there is broad access to STEM curriculum, that teachers are recruited and provided with professional development in STEM-related curricula, and that under-served populations are encouraged and supported to pursue a STEM education and career. There is both foundation and government support for STEM initiatives, as well as broad-based collaboration with high tech, universities, museums, etc. The cloud computing and statewide digital resources described in the application make likely that the technological infrastructure for many of the STEM initiatives will be in place. It should be noted, however, that the STEM emphasis appears to be more of disconnected projects than a coherent and inter-connected strand of the state's overall reform plan.

Total	15	15	15	
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### Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

#### Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

North Carolina has presented a comprehensive and coherent application that addresses all of the four reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. The state has been particularly successful in gaining the commitment and enthusiasm from a very broad range of stakeholders, including local teacher associations. North Carolina has presented evidence that it has already put a great deal of time, effort and resources into all of the priority areas and that the RTTT application builds from a position of strength.

#### Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The state's presentation presented evidence of deep understanding and commitment to the many school reform initiatives contained within their Race to the Top plans. The strong commitment on the part of LEAs and partners to work in collaboration with each other and with leadership throughout the state was communicated consistently and persuasively.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	407	411	
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### North Carolina Application #4920NC-3



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>65</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	14	15	

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state presents a clear, compelling and internally consistent agenda for education reform that addresses all of the parameters of the notice. Its focus on human capital initiatives, and on improving the lowest performing schools and districts, is supported by a range of initiatives that have ambitious yet achievable goals. The state has impressively generated virtually 100% support (including support for all initiatives) from the state's LEAs, school boards, and education associations, so the reforms described in its proposal are therefore likely to have broad statewide impact. It is not clear how the goals would be affected in the event the state were not to receive an RttT award.

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The state presented a sincere and comprehensive commitment to its reform agenda even in the absence of increased funding from RttT.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	19	19	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	

#### (A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state's implementation plan is thoughtful and well-designed, with several mechanisms to ensure success. Specifically, the PMO (Project Management Office), advisory groups, clear evaluation process, and Education Cloud are strong measures. The \$35 million project budget for technology infrastructure is significant, but there is no evidence it is reasonable or based on any internal or third-party estimate. PMO will likely function well as an oversight, grant administration and tracking, and performance management mechanism. The state's funding formula features several large supplemental, flexible allotments that should allow additional resources to be leveraged to support -- and maintain -- the RttT initiatives. There is a high level of stakeholder support for the initiatives, although support from the state's charter school sector is not evident.

#### (A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The state's presentation underscored its commitment to providing strong leadership, supporting LEAs, and using all available resources to advance its reform agenda consistent with RttT.



<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	10	10	
<b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The state's own reform agenda and initiatives have been consistent with the RtT framework. But the state has a very mixed record with respect to demonstrating student outcome improvements as defined in the criteria. While the state's NAEP scores show impressive gains (relative to the national average) over a 20 year period, the performance over the past 5-6 years is significantly less compelling -- especially in reading where the scores have declined. And there is no clear or consistent evidence of achievement gap narrowing on the NAEP. The state test scores show improvement in achievement as well as achievement gap reduction since the introduction of the new standards, and consistent improvement in the graduation rate. Overall, the state's student outcome data does not strongly demonstrate significant progress because of the lackluster recent trends, despite the progress made over the longer term.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>107</b>	

## B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The state sufficiently meets the criteria because it is a member of the Common Core standards consortium that is working toward timely implementation of common standards, and which includes a significant number of states. The state plans to adopt the standards as specified in Appendix 14.</p>				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The state sufficiently meets the criteria because it is a member of at least one consortium that is developing and implementing common assessments, and which includes a significant number of states. The state demonstrates its commitment to common, high-quality assessments by participating in several common assessment consortia and by remaining open to participating in others.</p>				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The state's plan is thorough and anticipates some of the key risks and challenges of implementing the common standards and assessments. Its goals -- starting with building and reinforcing consensus around the standards through aligning graduation criteria to them -- are consistent with the criterion, and the related activities are highly supportive of the goals. The plan also provides clear milestone target dates. There is</p>				



only a small dedicated project budget for B(3), although the support required for this criterion will likely be buttressed by the large professional development project budget included in the application.

Total	70	68	68	
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### C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	16	16	

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

No credit for elements 5, 8, 9 and 12 because there is reasonable uncertainty that the hypothetical ability to meet the requirements of these elements is actually happening in practice.

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The presenter stated all the elements were in place except the student and teacher identifiers (elements 1 and 8), but the "bridge" to post-secondary data systems was still in development. Based on this affirmation, credit was given for elements 5 and 9, but credit was deducted for element 10. The net effect was no change in score, as credit was not given for elements 1, 8, 10 and 12.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3	3	
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state has a solid plan for making data available. Its plan for ensuring the data will be used to support decision-makers, however, is less well-developed, and insufficiently addresses how the data will be used to drive continuous improvement of efforts in the broad range of areas identified in the criterion.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	12	14	
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**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state addresses all three of the criteria thoroughly. There is a clear plan to increase the use of instructional improvement systems, support the LEAs with professional development, and make the data available. Its language is often platitudinous (e.g., "comprehensive, next-generation, data-driven assessment system and will link it to our longitudinal data systems via the enhanced technological backbone," and "teachers will develop observable mastery of [formative assessments]; seamless and engaging flow of descriptive feedback"). There is insufficient evidence that the project budgets for the design of the Comprehensive Next Generation Assessment System (including the Cognitive Diagnostic Assessment Model) are reasonable, or how they were estimated. The concept of making the system "customizable" by each LEA is also undeveloped. The plan is vague with respect to making the data available to researchers evaluating subgroup, remedial and gifted student performance.

**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The presenters' thorough responses to the reviewer's question about addressing the needs of the state's growing LEP population indicates the state will likely emphasize use of the data to improve the outcomes of this subgroup.

Total	47	31	33	
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### D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	
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**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state has a multitude of high-quality alternative pathways and clearly meets the criteria for the existence and practice of alternative certification routes for teachers and principals in criteria (i). A large percentage of teachers, but only a small percentage of principals, have been licensed at least in part through these alternative pathways. The state appears to have a valid process for identifying vacancies, although the report in the appendix does not address content areas or principal shortages. The state's 10-point plan for addressing the shortages (assuming it has been implemented successfully) sufficiently addresses preparation of teachers. The plan for preparation of alternatively licensed principals --which includes a third-party program (New Leaders for New Schools) and the Regional Leadership Academies -- is less well-developed.

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The state reaffirmed its commitment to alternative certification and confirmed that the pathways meet at least 4 of the 5 elements included in the definition.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	11	11	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	22	22	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state is committed to measuring student growth as the foundation for measuring and improving teacher and principal performance. Its ABCs accountability system already uses student achievement growth as a key measure of performance. It is not clear, however, how student achievement growth will be "woven" throughout the relatively new Teacher Evaluation Process and Principal Evaluation Process rubrics. The plan to conduct annual evaluations does incorporate student growth as a significant factor by making it a necessary condition for "effective" teacher or principal status in Stage Two. The state's plan with respect to removal of ineffective teachers and principals is reasonable. There is insufficient description of how the critical Educator Evaluation Systems Support Teams will be assembled, and the state does not address the risk of an impasse in the event "valid, fair and reliable" methods cannot be agreed.

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The presenters all addressed the importance of using student achievement data to improve teacher and principal effectiveness. The state was candid about the challenges of incorporating data from the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) into a robust evaluation system, yet committed to implementing this system over the next two years. But the state remains vague about how big a factor student achievement growth will be in the rubrics.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	12	12	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specially areas	10	8	8	

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**



The state's plan -- including Regional Leadership Academies, the Teachers for Rural Schools Initiative, Teach for America, strategic staffing, and NC Virtual Public School -- is reasonable and innovative. The project budget calls for \$5MM for strategic staffing in years 2-3, but doesn't provide the assumptions on how the incentives would work and how the state justifies increasing targets beyond these two years. It is also unclear where in the budget the incentives that pay for the three year commitments under TRSI are held. For major third party relationships like TFA and NYC Leadership Academy there is no acknowledgement from the third party that they are in agreement with the proposal in principle. Overall the plan is thorough and well-conceived, but short on some critical details.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	
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**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state has a clear plan to link the student achievement data to the credentialing programs and publish the results. Its early start in measuring student growth through the ABCs accountability system, and the strong support from UNC, make its plan highly credible. The IHE report card concept will likely result in a significant public attention to the performance of the credentialing programs. The application is somewhat more vague with respect to principal credentialing ("the assessments also discern the impact of principals...") than it is for teachers.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	
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**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state proposes a high-quality, integrated plan. The related project budget of \$45 million for (D)(5) appropriately is the largest single budget request and addresses several other related criteria. The Professional Development Initiative concept in general is strong. One concern is that many of the supports are based on traditional approaches to professional development with a layer of the new standards, assessment, and student achievement data on top, rather than building the effort with the new initiatives contained in the proposal as the foundation of the plan.

**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The presenters re-emphasized the importance of professional development in making the reforms effective.

<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>117</b>	
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## E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state has the authority to intervene in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs and has demonstrated a commitment to doing so.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>35</b>	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	26	30	

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**



The state has a reasonable and valid methodology for identifying the lowest-achieving schools and districts. The state has demonstrated prior experience in using the intervention models and proposes to build on its experience -- especially with the District and School Transformation division and NC New Schools Project -- in its plan to use RttT funds to improve the effectiveness of its interventions. The state does not propose a mechanism for benchmarking progress during the "three-year change cycle" in the absence of targets, and it does not provide a way to ensure no more than 50% of the low-achieving schools in any LEA will use the transformation model. While the state does not clearly commit to using all of the reform models in the notice, it has demonstrated a history of identifying and intervening in low-achieving schools, and it has a good plan to use RttT funding to enhance its efforts.

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The state confirmed its commitment to supporting LEAs in turning around persistently low-achieving schools by implementing one of the four intervention models.

Total	50	41	45	
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	6	7	

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state decreased education spending in FY09 but increased it as a percentage of revenue, both net and gross of transfers. (The state sharply reduced K-12 spending and increased higher ed spending.) The state does have some funding programs -- e.g., low wealth supplemental funding and Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Funding -- that lead to more equitable funding, but it is not clear these programs can mitigate the ability of wealthier districts to provide up to 15% salary supplements from local funds. That flexibility of local districts, combined with class size legislation, likely results in the inability of high need and high poverty LEAs to compete for effective teachers. There do not appear to be any policies promoting the equitable funding of high poverty schools within LEAs.

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The state clarified how its funding formulas result in more equitable funding of school districts.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	15	21	
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state has a "low" cap on the number of charter schools in the state. The state has one authorizer but it meets the requirements of criterion (ii). The state's charter school operating funding formula provides comparable state funding to charter schools, but it is not clear that the proportional local funding is appropriately delivered. There is no facility funding stream. The state does enable the operation of innovative non-charter schools, but it is not clear they meet the definition of innovative, autonomous public schools in the notice.

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The state clarified that its Early College High Schools meet the definition of innovative, autonomous public schools.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	3	3	
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**



The state has several well-designed and funded initiatives that supplement the reform efforts described in the proposal, but with the exception of the fast-track licensure programs they do not necessarily create conditions favorable to reform or innovation, and it is not clear whether they have increased student achievement or resulted in other positive outcomes.

Total	55	24	31	
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### Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The state has demonstrated a strong track record in emphasizing STEM. It proposes a high quality plan, featuring several anchor STEM schools, that meets the criteria. The plan is likely to improve the rigor of STEM programs, engages numerous community partners to ensure its success, and -- because a STEM emphasis is integrated throughout other elements of the RttT proposal and administered through the NC New Schools Project -- will likely prepare more students (including underrepresented groups) for future STEM study and careers.				
Total	15	15	15	

### Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The state's plan is sufficiently comprehensive and addresses all of the key reform areas. The plan is coherent and underscores the state's demonstrated commitment to successful reform focused on improving student achievement and outcomes. The largest portions of the proposed budget -- professional development, Regional Leadership Academies, technology infrastructure, and assessment and evaluation systems -- are consistent with the core emphases of the state's strong proposal.				
Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	400	416	





# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### North Carolina Application #492ONC-4



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>63</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	43	43	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) The plan presents a clear and specific overview of a coherent and integrated reform approach. The goals, measures, and targets are sufficient. Plan includes college success in an appropriate fashion. Table 2 demonstrates well the details of their vision. (ii) Data table for MOU shows 100%, except 99% for teacher organization. Letters of support provide adequate data that reform support at the local level is genuine and broad. (iii) In addition to tables and graphs in A, high score is derived from reading the entire application. Plan needs more detail on teacher buy in for large districts, and whether the teachers support all parts of the plan.

#### (A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans

(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	17	17	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9	9	

#### (A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) Capacity building is a major strength of this application as evidenced by numerous policies, vehicles, strategies that are included. Proposal recognizes appropriately that state budget situation raises concerns about sustaining RTT over longer term. Some sensible remedies to sustaining effort are included. Evaluation plan is a useful element. Technology use is promising and creative. Several state agencies have different responsibilities for implementing the plan. SDE must implement major components of this RTT plan, but Governors office and post secondary education also have significant implementation roles. The specific implementation roles of each state agency needs more elaboration. Commitment of many state officials (including postsecondary leaders) is evidenced adequately throughout the proposal. Budget detail in appendix is precise and linked well to the many activities in the proposal. Adequate budget detail is provided, and necessary flexibility provided in budget categories that involve creating new initiatives. Overall, plans demonstrate a comprehensive, coherent and sophisticated grasp of the many components needed for statewide implementation. (ii) Impressive teacher organization letter indicates many local leaders (100) involved in application. Substantial prior collaboration across stakeholder groups is demonstrated in many parts of the application. Impressive inclusion of entire postsecondary sector is included in the application. More specific data on teacher buy in is needed through local association evidence of commitment to all parts of proposed reform. State teacher organization letters of support need to be supplemented with evidence from local teacher organizations.



**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The presentation provided sufficient information on the lead implementation role of the state education department. The oversight mechanism and process for finding and solving problems with SDE implementation is still not provided in sufficient detail.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	20	20	

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(i) A frank assessment of strengths and weaknesses is provided. Overall, long term reform progress is spread across all required reform elements. Progress in recent years has slowed on NAEP and not clear why. Postsecondary success programs are included and strengthen the proposal. State cannot use current state tests for student progress analysis because of recent state test changes, so unsure of any progress not based on NAEP. Charter school academic progress is not discussed, and needs to be included. (ii) North Carolina is an above average state in improving student outcomes. They have strong analytical capability on achievement measures. The major weakness is persistent trend of an achievement gap among minorities and low income students.

<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>113</b>	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(i) Participation in Common Core Consortium is convincing and complete. This consortium includes 48 states. (ii) Specific timeline and plan for adoption is provided, and appears feasible. The details of adoption create confidence that 2010 timeline can be met.

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
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**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

N.C. participates in 3 assessment consortiums, two of which have a majority of states. Diagnostic assessments and technology to implement them are specified well here, and appropriately expanded later in the application. NC has good prior experience in developing assessments, and a sophisticated grasp of the technical issues is displayed in this section.

<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

This section is exemplary in many dimensions. The sophisticated presentation starts exactly right. Beliefs of educators must change as well as their knowledge and skills. Particularly impressive is the linkage to



postsecondary education. The detailed discussion and tables make me confident that N.C. can meet its objectives. Many initiatives are combined in a coherent design to enhance standards and assessments.

Total	70	70	70	
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### C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	16	16	

#### (C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

America Competes data components number 5,8,9,12 are missing. Data elements are especially weak now that provide student linkages to postsecondary education progress and success. There is a very specific description of the state's current status on each data element, and there are feasible plans to phase in the missing data elements. This provides confidence that the missing data elements can be added during the projected timeline.

#### (C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The state presentation clarified that there are still four data items missing, but not the same elements as originally scored in Tier One. Data elements one and eight were specifically noted as missing during the state presentation.. SAT and ACT scores are not sufficient to satisfy criteria for college transition from high school data. Data element 12 is underdevelopment, but not complete yet.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4	4	
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#### (C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Data access will be provided to local educators through several integrated systems, such as pacing guides, logs, scoring rubrics, etc. The availability and dissemination of data to stakeholders is well covered here, and it correctly extends from parents to postsecondary education. All dimensions are covered, so proposal meets comprehensive standard. The plan needs more depth on how data will be accessed and used by policymakers and decision makers who are not part of an LEA.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	15	15	
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#### (C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

A promising and clear theory of action with a very coherent and comprehensive plan using many separate elements is presented. Theory of action is grounded in how data can be designed, accessed, and analyzed to improve instruction. Intensive professional development is utilized effectively to help teachers use data. Timeline is realistic and indicators of success linked to theory of action are presented well. A very impressive number of moving parts are linked effectively - e.g., pacing guides, logs, scoring rubric, diagnostic assessment, learning trajectories, etc. N.C. has an existing current base to build upon for implementing the sophisticated system proposed here. This section is strengthened by some details in D. The budget needs to provide more detail on money for implementation support for teachers and principals

Total	47	35	35	
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### D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	20	20	



**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Plan contains all key elements including several effective, alternative routes for teachers and administrators. Plan includes sufficient alternatives that do not rely on (nor are connected) to universities. Plan includes appropriate, separate route for technical education teachers that supports the impressive Early College program. Plan adapts educator preparation well to rural contexts. Good data on variety of delivery mechanisms is provided, including regional and virtual routes. Transitions to college activities are a strong point through wide-spread Early College Program. Plans for new administrator alternative routes are impressive and will include preparation. There is an effective plan for identifying shortage areas for teachers and principals.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems <sup>1</sup>	5	11	11	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	8	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(i) North Carolina has developed and used data systems for all the dimensions needed. Their data is linked directly to teachers and leaders. Also, the state has sufficient data on its use of prior teacher financial performance incentives to implement proposed plan. North Carolina has appropriate methods to predict student achievement from its longitudinal data sets. The state is a national leader in development of measuring student growth, and has impressive plans to build on a solid base (ii) The standards for teachers and administrators are aligned well with other standards (e.g., preparation of teachers/administrators). State has useful experience with using student growth in educator evaluations, but is rethinking appropriately thus use of promising new growth concepts. Phase in plan is based on future evaluation studies, so final evaluation system is uncertain. Compensation system needs to be developed, so it also is uncertain. But the planned future studies used for developing evaluation systems demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the challenges. Proposal is convincing that the complexity of all these planned teacher policy developments is recognized. Plan is very ambitious and has many promising prospective but untried elements. Therefore, the data provided here does not provide all the evidence needed to be certain that all performance measures can be met. (iii) Plan is detailed enough and based on solid past reforms and experience. The use of multiple years of growth data is appropriate. Stakeholder involvement is pledged and seems adequate. Reporting to public and educators has adequate description, and demonstrates grasp of all dimensions needed for adequate reporting. These are impressive plans, but cannot predict with certainty that all this can be accomplished. (iv) Plan demonstrates detailed initiatives for how to evaluate major decisions needed for performance of teachers and administrators. The plan is coherent and specific on what data is needed for each decision. It provides a high level of confidence that all this can be accomplished including a complex technology phase in. The timetables and performance measures are realistic. However, proposal depends on development of new and untried systems.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	14	14	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	9	

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**



(i) This is an extremely strong section that covers in depth the necessary elements for high poverty and hard to staff schools. It starts with a strong data base about the current distribution of educators. It is sensitive to different contexts in various LEA's. The plan links D3 to D4 and D5 in a coherent and reinforcing manner. (ii) This section provides sufficient strategies and specific initiatives to improve distribution, and it realizes appropriately that a number of out of state supporting organizations are needed to implement plan. Specific and realistic performance measures are provided and justified well, except nothing provided for progress on special education and ELL.

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

Presentation provided sufficient detail on the development and appropriate distribution of ELL teachers, and clarified the concern with this area.

**(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs**

14

9

10

**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Plan provides sufficient data on student achievement and growth (including value added) to evaluate programs for teachers and administrators. Strength of this section includes the extensive data based evaluation for teachers and principals. Proposal needs more analysis of content and effectiveness of current teacher and administrator programs including coursework and fieldwork. Also, the plan needs more evidence on the characteristics of past or current programs that are particularly ineffective or effective. D4 covers new initiatives in administrator preparation, but proposal is vague on how many institutions these new initiatives will include. Many existing administrator programs in USA are part time, accept almost all applicants, and are not rated as valuable by administrators after they graduate. Proposal should discuss such problems.

**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The presentation provided clarification that the state recognizes the low quality of several current teacher and administrator preparation programs. Plans to improve quality were better defined, and will provide some improvement.

**(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals**

20

18

18

**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Professional development is covered comprehensively and a major focus and thread throughout the proposal. This strengthens the proposal. D5 includes many specific PD approaches adapted to various local contexts. D5 aligns PD well to other parts of the proposal, and demonstrates how they will reinforce each other (data, National Board Certified teachers, Common Core curriculum, various delivery vehicles, etc.) Sustaining all this proposed is addressed after RTT ends. A concern is whether the state can accomplish so many initiatives in D5 in such a short time. Phase in of all these initiatives needs more elaboration.

Total

138

118

120

**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**



State authority to intervene in districts and schools is clear and complete. A strong point is that principals can be removed and state reviews are based on many dimensions of school success.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	27	29	

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(i) The worst 5% of schools are identified based on many appropriate data points and reviews. Specific characteristics of lowest 5% presented in sufficient detail. (ii) Plan includes enough data based and multiple criteria for effective state intervention in low performing schools. Local context differences are understood, and policies are sensitive to urban versus rural contexts. The Restart model presented here is not same as charters. For example, the LEA is manager for restart, and this is very different than an independent charter operator. Plan needs more justification for why the proposed restart model will be sufficient for turning around all schools that need it. Considerable experience with creating small high schools is demonstrated, and it may be useful for future turn around schools. Early College High Schools are widespread, and demonstrate a positive impact on students. The State relies heavily on turnaround and transformation, and has a lot of experience with these models. The timetables for more drastic intervention need to be presented in more detail when local school results are not achieved. Transformation has all 5 elements needed. In sum, the differences between charter schools and N.C. restart schools is not clear. School closure is an underutilized reform strategy in this plan. Charters may be limited by the strict cap. The lack of these policy options may prevent the state from using more drastic interventions in situations where local politics or local capacity inhibit the success of turn around strategies included in the proposal. STEM and virtual school plans are detailed and impressive.

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The restart approach was clarified by expanding on the design and operation of Early College high schools as a model for other types of restart. This explanation results in a higher score for restart model in the application.

<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>	
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**F. General**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The overall state revenues and share of state budget for education are adequate. The state distribution formula has equalization components, but there are many complex formulas. The proposal needs more overall measures of equalization provided such as McLoone index or differences in spending among specific types of districts. The plan needs more data on causes of spending differences between all local districts, and specific equalization impact on students of higher state payments for disadvantaged pupils. Plan should provide data on the differences in spending between the top 5 percent of schools and the lowest 10%.

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The impact of state finance equalization formulas on school districts was clarified, and provides sufficient data to improve score.



<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>A charter cap of 100 is in place so only 5 schools can be added. It is evident that this is too limited a cap to provide enough charters in such a large state. There is no indication that more charters is a significant RTT strategy in the future. The plan provides insufficient information concerning adequate and equitable charter funding for operations and facilities. The base funding for charters is \$3,545, but there are other state funding categories where impact on adequate charter funding is unspecified. It is unclear how charters are affected by all spending categories, so cannot judge adequacy of charter funding. No direct state funding for charter facilities is provided, and the proposal indicates this is a problem for current charter operation and expansion.</p>				
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b> <p>The presentation provided information on the additional funds provided to charter schools, so that they are able to be equivalent in funding to traditional schools. The state funding for charter schools does meet the criteria.</p> <p>Presentation clarified that schools like Early College High Schools are sufficiently autonomous to meet the criteria. These schools control their budgets, and make independent decisions.</p>				
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The narrative does not reference other supporting data presented elsewhere in the plan, such as the many different schools like Early College High Schools. Mentioning all reforms would strengthen this section. Overall, N.C. has many other significant reforms (in addition to early childhood and drop out initiatives) that are mentioned in this section. All of these reforms should be summarized in F3 in order to provide a complete overview of other reforms.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>	

### Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

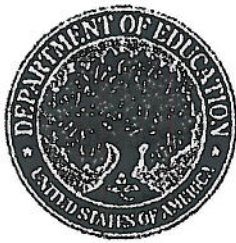
	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>STEM is in many parts of application, particularly B, D, E. The new STEM high schools in E are well specified and varied. This section provides more STEM projects, but there is no linkage across the proposal to create a coherent and comprehensive plan. There are many good and creative concepts and ideas, but overall impression is one of disconnected projects. For example, the STEM cluster networks in Section E are not integrated with this section. But the various sections do include adequate STEM proposals for specific courses, teacher improvement, and increasing students for STEM careers.</p>				
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b> <p>The presentation clarified some of the connections between STEM projects, but more coherence is still needed.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	



**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> N.C. addresses all four reform components. There are only a few major weaknesses in the proposal such as charter schools, some elements of the data system, and additional turnaround strategies. Lots of details are included in each section, particularly D. This leads to confidence that plan is feasible. But D has many new components that are hard to predict with certainty that they will be effective. The past record of reform implementation and impact upon achievement is impressive. The content and specifics of the proposal provides considerable encouragement that major reform can be implemented.				
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>430</b>	





# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### North Carolina Application #4920NC-5



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>64</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	14	

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

A (1) (i) The state has proposed a coherent reform agenda. The agenda relies on some systems that are not in place and will be difficult to put in place state wide. The agenda addresses and integrates the four areas described in the ARRA. The proposal emphasizes building teacher capacity rather than improving student outcomes. 3/5 A (1) (ii) Each of the state's 174 LEAs has agreed to implement each element of the preliminary scope of work including the turnaround provisions (should they apply). The scope of work is explicit about which parts of the RTT application the LEAs are committing to. Other signatories include the union leaders (as applicable) and presidents of each local school board. The terms and conditions of the MOU reflect a strong commitment on the part of each LEA and signatory. In addition there was wide spread involvement by key stakeholders in the state's preparation of the application. 45/45 A (1) (iii) Translating LEA participation into state wide impact With one hundred percent of the LEAs in the state participating in all elements of the plan, all students in the state will be affected by this plan, including K-12 students in poverty. The state has also articulated achievable goals for increasing student achievement and decreasing achievement gaps. The state is not able to disaggregate some of its data to provide the level of detail regarding each sub group requested in the application. The state does not provide detail regarding what its goals would look like without an RTT award. 12/15

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The presentation by the state's team made more clear how the state would coordinate the implementation of the plan. The state's presentation made more clear the depth of knowledge of those responsible for leading implementation. The presentation demonstrated the ability and willingness of major stakeholders to collaborate to implement the plan. The presentation made more clear the level of commitment among the major stakeholders. The presentation demonstrated that there was a greater level of comprehensiveness in the plan than was perceived during the Tier I process. The presentation demonstrated that there was a greater likelihood of impact, state-wide, than was perceived during the Tier I process.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9	9	

#### (A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)



i. Capacity: a. The leadership for the implementation of the state's plan has a history or commitment and possesses helpful experience. The leadership team is broad based representing all or virtually all of the significant stakeholders. 4/4 b. The state has systems in place that provide significant support to its LEAs. The state proposes to enhance and expand these systems in this proposal. The result will be a series of supports that are integrated and which will greatly increase the chances of the state succeeding in accomplishing each of the four RTT reforms. Among them is a regional service system that has recently been redesigned to intensify and enrich the services provided to the lowest achieving and/or least capacity. The state has and will enhance a communication system to disseminate information on which the state's reforms are founded. The state will substantially improve its technology infrastructure and resources available to the LEAs. Under this rubric, the state will create a server-based infrastructure (NC Education Cloud) to provide direct support for LEAs which undertake specific RTT initiatives. 4/4 c. The state provides strong evidence that it has effective and efficient processes in place and that it will improve them during the grant. 4/4 d. The state provides evidence of having already begun reforms consistent with the four areas in the ARRA. This has been made possible in part by the state's having has realigned, reallocated, and blended funds from existing local, state, and federal funds. The LEAs have a variety of funds available to them from the same sources. Because they have made the commitments they have to the state's RTT proposal, the LEAs will now have to go through a similar re-direction of funds to meet their obligations under RTT. The state makes this explicit in its narrative at pp. 25 and 26. 4/4 e. The state has a coherent approach and has already begun to engage a broad coalition of supporters and sources to sustain its plan after this funding expires. 4/4 ii. Stakeholder Support: a. The unions acknowledged their inclusion in the grant development process. There is less than full support from the unions representing the teachers and principals regarding the making of student growth/achievement a significant factor in their evaluations. 4/5 b. There is a broad array of other critical stakeholders who have expressed support for the RTT grant proposal. Some express significantly detailed knowledge of the proposal. 5/5

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18	18	

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. The state has made significant progress in implementing initiatives which complement the four RTT reform areas. It began the effort to improve standards and assessments and to align state curricula accordingly in 2007. This work also enhances students' preparation for college and career. The state implemented a state wide, longitudinal data system to provide access to student performance data in 2004. It is now being used in all LEAs and charter schools in the state. The state is continuing development and dissemination of a system designed to provide information regarding the "value added" to student progress by each students' teachers and schools. The state has begun several initiatives designed to increase the supply and effectiveness of teachers. These initiatives include adding rigor to the evaluation of teachers and principals, aligning teacher preparation to higher performance expectations and revised student learning standards, increasing the availability of relevant professional development, systematically monitoring teaching conditions state wide, and providing financial rewards for advanced certification, higher than expected student achievement, and voluntary transfers to challenging teaching environments. A concern is that the revised evaluation instruments are unwieldy requiring evaluators to address an extraordinary number of indicators. This is especially true of the teachers' instrument. In the case of teachers' evaluations, virtually all indicators are qualitative. These aspects of the current systems weaken their credibility as instruments for improving practice and student achievement. 4/5 ii. Improving student outcomes since 2003 or earlier; a. Student achievement in reading/language arts and ESEA tests: • Gains on NAEP scores have flattened and percentages of proficiency have declined recently. ESEA test scores have increased after the implementation of new standards. The efforts to reduce gaps in achievement on NAEP tests between whites and identified sub groups showing mixed results. There is no suggestion of any "breakthrough." • Scores on state developed reading and math tests have increased with the introduction of new standards. Gaps remain in the area of AYP at elementary and middle school levels, but there are reductions in gaps



almost across the board in math and reading at Grade 10. b. Results on closing achievement gaps: • NAEP since 2003: In math Grade 4, four identified sub groups experienced increases in the gap between their scores and those of white students. There was no change in the gap for one sub group, and one group experienced a decrease. In grade 8 math, three groups experienced increases and three experienced decreases. In grade 4 reading, three groups experienced increases and three decreases. In grade 8 reading, three experienced increases, two decreases, and there was no change for another. • AYP: In reading Grades 3 and 8, gaps have increased between whites and each sub groups except for the Asian sub group. In math Grades 3 and 8, the gaps have decreased for all sub groups. For Grade 10 reading, all gaps decreased except for that between whites and Native Americans where there was no change. In Grade 10, all gaps decreased. • Graduation rates: The gap between the graduation rates of whites and blacks and whites and English language learners increased between 2006 and 2009. The gap decreased for Hispanics, American Indians, multi-racial students, economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. c. High school graduation rates: The "NC mean score" for graduation increased by five percentage points from 2006 through 2009. The percentage points for each identified sub group increased except for English language learners. Summary for A (1) 3: Overall the state shows modest gains in improving student achievement as measured by tests and a diminishing rate of progress. There are greater gains on the state's own tests. Significant achievement gaps persist between whites and the identified sub groups in both the state's achievement tests and in AYP. There has been a reduction in the gaps between whites and several the sub groups in graduation rates. The graduation rate gap has increased, however, in the case of two of the larger sub groups--blacks and English language learners. The most progress has been in overall graduation rates where the rate for all students has increased substantially, and the rate for every sub group but English language learners has increased. 18/25

Total	125	111	115	
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## B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
i. Participating in consortium developing high quality standards a. The state has joined and executed the requisite MOU to be part of the Common Core State Standards Initiative consortium of states. The work will entail developing common K-12 Math and English Language Arts standards that are internationally benchmarked and build toward college/career readiness by the time of high school graduation-10/10 b. The consortium includes 48 states. 10/10 ii. The state has provided a detailed and high quality plan for adopting these common standards by August 2, 2010. -20/20				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
i. The state has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments to meet the criteria stated here. -5/5 ii. The state is participating with several consortia to develop assessments which meet the stated criteria. More than a majority of all the states are involved. -5/5				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	20	15	15	



**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

**Transition Plan:** The state proposes four goals for the transition to the common core standards. They are to gain commitment among key stakeholders. The outline of tasks to disseminate and persuade stakeholders especially teachers is reasonably calculated to increase awareness and understanding. The range of mediums to be used makes sense. The state has reorganized its SEA to better focus on LEAs and schools; so the newly aligned system should be capable of doing the tasks outlined. The training before implementation is to be differentiated by role. This will increase the relevancy of the training to the recipients. The state outlines a sequence of delivery steps that is consistent with current thinking about the best ways to "teach" these kinds of content and skills. The state will provide new assessments which will complement the new standards. It will provide background training in grading and assessments in addition to the training in using the new assessments. The rationale for this dual approach is sound—that teachers need more understanding of sound assessment theory and practice to move from repeating old, now discredited approaches to assessment and grading. The state will ensure that schools have the resources so that teachers/leaders can make more thorough and timely use of the new assessments. Without the resources, the new approaches will not have much impact or credibility. The last goal is integrate the common standards with admission to the state IHEs and with the teacher/leader preparation programs. Doing the former will make students pre-college education more relevant. It will help them be more college ready. Doing the latter will enable new teachers able to begin their teaching implementing the new standards and assessments and conforming their practice to the new evaluation system. **Performance Standards:** There are several concerns. First, the measurements of improvement are qualitative when, arguably, the state could determine whether there is an increase in student achievement following the implementation of the standards using its existing capacity to link student achievement to LEAs, school, and teacher/leaders. Second, in the absence of baseline data, there is no context by which to judge whether a cumulative increase of 32% over four years in affirmations among teachers regarding the positive impact of the new standard is ambitious or not. The target of having 90% of the pre-service programs aligned with the new evaluation tool by the end of Year 3 is ambitious and achievable. The target to complete all tasks related to delivering resources to the LEAs on the timelines set in sub sections 1, 2, 3 is very ambitious. Given the vagaries associated with such a wide spread dissemination project, achieving the latter goal is problematic. [15/20]

Total

70

65

65

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully Implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	10	14	
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The information provided is detailed but not clear. It appears that the state meets America COMPETES standards without question on five elements and partially on the rest. 10/24 <b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b> The presentation clarified what elements of America COMPETES the state has "fully implemented" and those that it has not. Those elements that are NOT fully implemented are 1,5,8,10, and 12.				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	5	5	5	
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The state provides copious, relevant data to its LEAs, teachers, students and parents already. LEAs have access to current test results by student, classroom, school and LEA. Historical data of the same kind is also available. The SEA will help LEAs analyze the data for planning and goal setting. Teachers have access to the above and have or will have individual student data organized so that they can make their				



lessons accessible. They can use the data to differentiate for individual or student groups. Students and parents are given an individual report after every summative assessment. A report can be used to compare scores on several scales, chart and set goals for growth, identify strengths and weaknesses, and monitor progress against benchmarks. The state is enhancing its longitudinal reporting system and providing stakeholders with a "business intelligence tool." Combined these will enable users to create more varied and specific data reports. 5/5

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>i. The state has a very a coherent plan to increase the use of local, instructional improvement systems. The plan is integrated with the state's plans for improving standards and assessments. When implemented and teachers have the skills to use it, the system promises to make major positive changes in what teachers will know about their students, when they will know it (i.e. during class), and what they will be able to do regarding planning, assessing, and tailoring instruction. The system will also enable leaders to monitor and support the thorough and timely teaching of the curriculum by the assigned teachers. There is a concern that the allocation of resources to this very challenging professional development project is sufficient. There is a concern that the work can be completed according to the highly ambitious schedule proposed. 4/6 ii. The state has a thorough and comprehensive plan of support for LEAs. Implementing the plan will result in useful and tailored training to teachers, principals, and administrators in the use of the proposed system. The proposed ISS will generate a rich assortment of data for continuous improvement. As a result of the planned work, the proposed ISS will be implemented for math K-8 in Year 4 of the grant. Another ISS for K-8 science will be piloted in Year 4. It is not clear whether or to what extent one or more components of the system will be implemented in other disciplines. Given the apparent potential for improvement that could be effected by use of individual components, this lack of clarity calls to question the ambition of the implementation targets. 4/6 iii. The narrative indicates that the state is eager to share the data made available by the proposed ISS. The state promises to link the ISS data with other data sets and to extract the data in response to requests. Given the premium on evaluation and continuous improvement in the application, that the plan regarding these steps is general rather than specific detracts from its quality. 4/6</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>31</b>	

#### D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>i. The state has the authority to authorize the existence of alternative routes to certification for teacher and principals. Programs can be operated by other than IHEs. The applicable policies show that the programs are selective. Course work is significantly limited in comparison to traditional programs. Programs provide supervised, school based experiences. Alternatively certified candidates gain the same level of certification as those in traditional programs. The kinds and amounts of in-school supports candidates receive is not clear. 6/7 ii. The alternative routes to certification are being heavily used. Forty-eight percent of all licensed teachers hold licenses obtained them through an alternative path. Last year, 26 percent of teachers earning a license earned it through an alternative program. The alternative routes for principals are much less used. No principals were licensed last year by alternative means and only three percent of current principals used an alternative program. Based on use, the teachers' programs are serving a need for candidates and the state. The principals' programs apparently are not. 4/7 iii. There is a systematic approach to identifying areas of teacher/principal shortage. There is a plan being implemented to systematically address the causes of these shortages and to fill vacancies. 5/7</p>				



<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	11	11	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7	7	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	22	22	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

I. In 1996-97, the state began using a school level accountability system included measures of student achievement growth. The state's definitions of "growth" and "student achievement" are consistent with those in the RTT scoring rubric. With USED support, the state revised its growth formulas in 2006. At subsection "D (2) iii," of its narrative, the state describes a cautious multi-year plan for defining "student growth" and incorporating some form of the definition in evaluations in 2010-11 with use of a refined definition in 2012-13. 5/5 ii. Currently, "student growth" as defined and student achievement more generally are not significant factors in a teacher's evaluation. Inclusion of either as a criterion for rating a teacher is inferential rather than specific. In addition and as noted above, the evaluation instrument is unwieldy to administer and is focused almost exclusively on qualitative, subjective judgments. Under the standards for principals, increasing student achievement (without a definition of student growth) is a high priority. As noted under "I." above, the state will have developed its definition of student growth by 2012-13. In that year, both teachers' and principals' evaluation instruments will be amended to add a formalized student growth component. The same groups that developed the current system will prepare the amendments. At the same time, definitions of effective and highly effective teachers and principals will be implemented. These steps will make student growth a significant factor in evaluations of teachers and principals. During the time that the definitions are being developed, the state will provide teachers, principals, and evaluators with professional development through support teams that will include coaching, feedback, and training differentiated by role. This support will last through 2013-14. The plan for training in the use of the instruments is a good one, and the targets are suitably ambitious. The level of involvement planned for the stakeholders most affected by the evaluations will make the systems "fair" in the sense that those evaluated will be well represented. Both instruments will differentiate among teachers and principals by their effect on student growth. The concerns about the current quality of the instruments, especially but exclusively the instrument for the teachers, reduce the overall quality of the plan. 11/15 iii. Teachers and principals will continue to be evaluated annually under this plan. Formative reviews for both occur during the year before the summative evaluation. The timelines provided in the evaluation cycles provide for appropriately frequent feedback. These timelines, however, exacerbated the concerns noted regarding the number of indicators evaluators must address. As noted, the subjective nature of the indicators is likely to reduce the credibility of the feedback. Because student achievement data is now available and the amount will increase, it is a concern that the state does not plan to reduce the number of qualitative indicators its evaluators must address. 7/10 iv. Use evaluations to inform various decisions: a. The planned evaluations systems will provide substantial information and will cause teachers and principals to receive coaching, induction support and professional development. Each kind of support will be differentiated by role. The concerns about there being too many indicators are pertinent. The proposed instruments include so many indicators that it will be difficult for teachers and principals to concentrate on what most clearly affects learning. Instruments with fewer focused on those aspects of practice that most contribute to student learning would improve the quality of the evaluations. 4/7 b. The plan to promote and retain teachers/ principals is competently integrated with the evaluation system. The state outlines a process to develop a compensation system linked to the evaluation system and student growth. There are no annual performance targets for this process, and the outcome is uncertain. 4/7 c. Decisions regarding tenure/full certification are clearly and competently integrated with the planned evaluation system. 7/7 d. Decisions regarding removal of teachers/principals are clearly and competently integrated in a detailed fashion with the evaluation system. The planned approach provides due process and multiple opportunities to remain licensed. 7/7



<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10	10	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6	6	
<b>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>i. The state's primary strategy is to substantially increase the supply of effective/highly effective teachers and principals. One initiative is to create regional leadership academies to prepare aspiring principals for placement in high needs schools. The target is to place 75 principals a year beginning in Year 2 of the grant. The plan includes two different approaches to preparing and placing new teachers in either rural or urban high needs districts. One initiative is to increase Teach for America placements in the state by 36 percent (150 teachers) for each of the four years of the grant. The other initiative provides for recruiting, training, induction and three years of n school support for new teachers committee to working in high needs rural schools. The target is 90 teachers in Years 2-4. Both of the latter approaches include some emphasis on STEM and hard to staff areas. The fourth initiative provides incentives and support to LEAs to create their own programs based on their individual needs. The state will encourage the LEAs to focus on STEM and hard to staff courses. The fifth initiative is to expand courses taught by effective teachers in the state's virtual high school and increase the access of high needs students to those courses. Teachers will be selected for their proven success with high needs students, and courses will be tailored to the students needs. The first three initiatives are based in part on successful programs existing elsewhere, research, and in the case of the TFA initiative, on the state's analysis of its experience with TFA. Each contains highly credible approaches to recruiting, training, and sustaining persons who are likely to become effective teachers in high needs or hard to staff areas. The latter initiatives are more speculative regarding their results. The targets for the first three initiatives are highly ambitious. There are no specific targets for the latter two. An important component in the plan is a decrease in the numbers of ineffective teachers/principals in high needs schools. The concerns about the quality and application of the two evaluation instruments pertain here. In addition, there is no explicit description of how the reduction of the ineffective educators will be accomplished. Both detract from the quality of the plan. 10/15</p> <p>ii. The state's plan for increasing equity in STEM and hard to staff areas is integrated into its overall plan for increasing the supply of effective teachers. Thus, the comments re. quality and ambitiousness stated in "i." apply here. The state did not specify annual targets showing an increase in numbers or percentage of effective teachers in these areas. 6/10</p>				
<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	
<b>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>i. The state is already using a system which enables it to link student achievement with publicly funded teacher preparation programs—both traditional and alternative. With this grant, the state will refine the system in place and expand it to include privately funded preparation programs. The state will be able to use its definitions of student growth as they are developed to supplement the data already in use. One of the initiatives planned is to publish a "report card" for these preparation programs. There is no time-specific target for completing the initiative. 6/7</p> <p>ii. The in state's publicly funded preparation programs have access to data that link those who attended their educator preparation programs with student achievement. They have been "challenged" to improve or discontinue unsuccessful programs. The privately funded programs will gain access to the data through this grant. The plan is not specific about how and when the public programs will act on the "challenge" or when data will be provided the privately funded programs. 3 /7</p>				
<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	



**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. This proposal includes the creation of a professional development network orchestrated by the SEA. There will be regional centers with SEA professional development teams housed at each. The regional teams will support LEA and/or school teams. The regional teams will be supported by private contractors and effective, experienced teachers and leaders ("Professional Development Leaders") who will deliver much of the professional development at the local level or online. The regional teams will orchestrate needs assessments and the development of local professional development plans by LEAs and schools. Priority areas for these plans have been identified by surveys of front line personnel. They are: the implementing of common standard and assessments, implementing the new evaluation systems, effective use of data from the longitudinal data bases, and implementing the new instructional support systems. SEA and regional teams will marshal the needed resources, identify, and contract for the services to be delivered by the Professional Development Leaders or other contractors. The agreed training will be delivered in a variety of formats using various kinds of media. There is an emphasis on using "e-learning tools." The state is also encouraging formation of professional learning community teams at schools and the embedding of time during the contractual day during which PLCs can work. The PLCs will be the work groups that implement the new standards operate the instructional support systems. The plan is integrated with the RTT reform areas. The description of this plan in the narrative is logical, consistent, and cohesive. There are concerns that the budget does not provide sufficient resources for the scope of the tasks. There is a concern that the timeline for having the PLCs fully able to implement standards, assessments, and the instructional support system is overly optimistic. There is a concern that, given the amount of time and personal supervision that is required to make PLCs effective in undertaking new and unfamiliar tasks such as data analysis and differentiate planning, the implementation will be uneven. These reduce the overall quality of the plan. 7/10

ii. The plan includes annual evaluations of the professional development. The evaluations include an annual analysis of the impact of the plan on teaching practices and student achievement. The state's data system will enable the evaluators to link the training provided with student achievement. The plan provides for adjusting the content and delivery systems in response to this feedback. This approach is consistent with the concept of continuous improvement. 10/10

**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

i. The presentation clarified the nature and extent of the support provided for teachers and principals regarding their work with struggling students, especially those entitled to ESOL services. 9/10

Total	138	102	104	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
E. (1) The state has the authority and responsibility to intervene directly in its lowest achieving schools and in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective acting status. The authority and responsibility are contained in the state's constitution, state statutes, and several court decisions. Since 2004, it has intervened in 700+ school and 40 LEAs. 10/10				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**



i. In the past the state has used a "performance composite score" based on end of grade and end of course assessments to identify turnaround schools. These have been subject to intervention and monitoring by the SEA. For this plan, the state has revised its turnaround criteria. Its new criteria will include any school with a performance composite under 50%, any high school with a graduating rate below 60%. In addition, the state will define persistently lowest achieving schools as the lowest 5% of any the Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring which has a composite performance of 50% or less or is a high school with a graduating rate of 60% or less. These criteria meet the specifications in the scoring rubric. 5/5 ii. The state has been innovative during the past five years in its efforts to turn around persistently low achieving schools. The state has had significant success. It has also learned important lessons about what is likely to be more successful. In planning how to move forward during the years of an RTT grant, the state has applied the lessons learned to eliminate some turnaround strategies and refine others. It is also advancing new strategies that reflect their experience, research, and continued innovation. In turning around the low achieving schools identified using the new RTT-related criteria, the state will intervene at both the school and LEA levels. In doing so, the state will blend elements of the four models described in the application in thoughtful ways that reflect the state's previous learning. The state will provide all schools with additional resources to improve student supports. The state's plan will allow schools and LEAs some flexibility, but both schools and LEAs will also be faced with some non negotiable mandates. In addition, the state will provide a level of on-going management and oversight. The timelines for the schools and LEAs are rigorous, and failure to improve can result in forfeiture of control and/or closure. All of the schools and LEAs identified as low achieving under the RTT criteria will begin their turn around process this school year. The state does not state annual turnaround targets in the table for performance measures. The reason is that the state's experience indicates turning around a school takes several years (i.e. three years). Therefore, each school and LEA is expected to be meeting the state's turn around exit criteria in 2013-14. Because the plan relies on in-state experience, research, and continues thoughtful and imaginative innovation, it is of very high quality. Given this, the substitution of a three year target for all identified schools and LEAs in lieu of annual targets is appropriate and meets the criteria of ambitious and achievable. 35/35

<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	
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## F. General

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
i. The state increased funding to public education including higher education as a proportion of actual state revenue and as a proportion of total funding available for state expenditures. (Table 15 provides the data and the analysis.) 5/5 ii. The state's policies are designed to result in (a) equitable funding between high need LEAs and other LEAs and (b) between high poverty schools and others within each LEA. The state uses its targeted categorical allotments for "DSSF" and low wealth districts to achieve equity between high and low needs districts. LEAs determine the distribution of funds among their schools. The state asserts that its maximum individual class sizes laws, its state salary schedules, its funding by positions, and its school performance monitoring are tools that it uses to prevent local funding decisions from creating in equitable conditions. 5/5				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
i. The state law sets a firm limit on the total number of charter schools that can exist. It also fixes the number of charter schools that can operate in any LEA at one time. These laws have the effect of limiting the number of charter schools currently operating to 3.8% of the total number of schools in the state. The state has authorized additional schools that it regards as "charter like". Combined the total number of the				



two categories of schools represents 8.1% of schools in the state. The latter do not meet the criteria for charter schools stated in the scoring rubric; so they are not considered for the purposes of scoring this sub section. 2/8 ii. The state's approach to charter schools requires student achievement to be a significant factor in renewal. The narrative does not specifically state that schools are encouraged to serve student populations that are similar to local district populations including high needs students. The state has closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools. 5/8 iii. The state's narrative asserts that charter schools receive equitable funding compared to traditional schools. The specific data that would enable a comparison of the actual funding received by charter schools on a per pupil basis with the same for students at traditional schools is not provided. This makes application of the scoring rubric problematic. 5/8 iv. The state does not provide charter schools with funding for facilities, but charter schools can use any state or local funds for these purposes. Data that would allow for a comparison between what is available to charter schools and what is available to traditional schools is not provided. This makes applying the scoring rubric problematic. The state does not impose facility related requirements on charter schools that are more strict than those applied to traditional schools. 5/8 v. The state enables and encourages LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charters. They are encouraged to target at risk students. 8/8

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The state has supported a variety of reforms and innovations designed to increase student achievement and graduation rates and to narrow achievement gaps. The state has also encouraged the development of a wide range of schools tailored to the special needs of a community or region and/or to address the special needs/ interests of specific cohorts of students. 5/5				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	

### Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The state has a history of fostering initiatives designed to expand and increase the rigor its programs for STEM education. This plan is likely to result in a significant increase the availability of rigorous courses of study in STEM. The state's approach to enhancing STEM education meets the criteria for preparing and assisting teachers to integrate STEM content across the grades and disciplines through effective and relevant instruction and applied learning opportunities for students. The initiatives and strategies are competently designed to result in the preparation of more students for advanced study and careers in the STEM disciplines. This includes underrepresented groups and women.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	

### Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Overall, this plan is a well organized and comprehensive approach to reform in each of the four RTT areas. The initiatives are generally well conceived. There is a clear commitment to improve of student				



achievement. There is wide spread support for the plan among educators, state leaders, and other key stakeholders. The scope of work has been endorsed by the leaders of all 115 school districts. In most instances the targets for implementation are ambitious and achievable. The state's plan is built on its previous work in reform. The state's plan expands on initiatives currently under way. Several of the initiatives proposed under this grant complement initiatives funded by other sources. The plan blends and leverages funds from a variety of sources. The state is reallocating and repurposing funds to make their use more consistent with the priorities stated in RTT application. There is a credible approach to continuing the reforms beyond the life of the grant.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	410	420	
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### North Carolina Application #4920NC10



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	44	44	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The application clearly describes a set of comprehensive and inter-related programmatic initiatives to address the four education areas for this grant competition. It has four goals for improving student outcomes statewide that are described in detail including targets for NAEP, graduation rates, SAT and AP measures and college enrollment rates. Overall, this section of the application presents a credible path to achieving its educational reform goals. The application provides a copy of the standard MOU and the completed summary table indicating agreement by all 115 LEAs in the state (including the two largest and the 48 lowest-achieving schools) to fully implement all components of the state reform agenda. Extensive leadership support is demonstrated by signatures from presidents of teacher unions, presidents of local school boards, and LEA superintendents. All except one LEA teacher union president signed an agreement to participate. The one exception is from a medium-sized LEA with 34 schools and 27,510 students of which 9,618 are in poverty. It is unclear why this one LEA does not have the support of the teachers' union leader. Nonetheless, documentation indicates that 100% of the LEAs have agreed to implement the plans in this application. There is a summary table for this section which indicates numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, k-12 students and students in poverty. The state's goals are expected to positively impact students' achievement and graduation rates for all target subgroups (outlined in Appendix 1) and to narrow achievement gaps. The application does not fully delineate subgroup targets for college enrollment, remedial course enrollment after high school graduation and AP exam performance. There is no description of the state's future reform goals if RttT funding is not awarded. The high level of LEA support for the plans in this application indicates that the state has an opportunity to reach its ambitious goals.

#### (A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans

	30	20	20	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	10	10	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	

#### (A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The application clearly identifies the persons in the state who will serve on the NC RttT management team and describes the history of reform work already accomplished by those on the team related to the state's reform goals. The leadership team has strong assessment, accountability and data expertise as well as expertise in educational administration, professional development and curriculum reform processes. The state's leadership team is lacking strong expertise in STEM and English language arts and reading, which may impede guiding schools toward the applicant's ambitious student achievement goals. The applicant



requests a very large budget and it is unclear how equitably distributed LEAs involvement would be in various initiatives such as STEM, improvements to teacher preparation, and strategic staff development. The evaluation plan lacks a central leadership structure for integrating and analyzing data collected across the four reform areas and across the multiple organizations and multiple evaluators in the plan. There are no cross-initiative evaluation questions to provide answers about the overall impacts and effectiveness of the grant statewide. The evaluation plan has only initiative-specific evaluation questions, data sources and timelines organized in component parts for each of the four reform areas. Large amounts of qualitative measures in the evaluation plan may challenge the reliability and validity of the evaluation data without a clear process for establishing the inter-rater reliability of qualitative data collection. There is a detailed plan to create a K-12 education cloud infrastructure that is intended to improve technology reliability, support a statewide data system and reduce LEAs' computing costs while providing access to digital resources. Attention to the content, purpose and quality of digital resources is lacking although digital resources represent more than 50% of the funds requested for the state's cloud initiative. There is no clear plan for using digital resources that target core curricular areas to enrich student learning in math, reading and STEM-related content. Instead the application lists generic digital tools (such as blogs, wikis, social networking tools, educational videos) that have no direct evidence of effectiveness for increasing student achievement. In addition, migrating 100% of LEAs from multiple school-based to a centralized cloud-based server infrastructure may pose major coordination challenges without a clear plan to train LEAs technical staff to assist in the migration process. This may create organizational barriers to implementing the statewide technology infrastructure in its given timeline. The application clearly describes a broad group of stakeholders who have provided letters of support in the appendix. Stakeholder groups include teacher and principal unions and statewide associations, PTA, governmental agencies, institutions of higher education, education related foundations, business partners, and award-winning teacher leaders.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	15	15	
<b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The application describes initiatives already underway in the state that address the four reform areas. These include the work began in 2007 to revise standards and assessments and accountability; longitudinal data system to be completed in 2010; a number of major professional development initiatives; and description of school turnaround programs responsible for steadily improved student achievement. The application provides raw NAEP data going back more than 10 years for 4th and 8th grade math and reading and science and writing for required subgroups. The state has mixed results with regard to sustaining student achievement. The narrative provides analysis and charts illustrating that the state had an increase in reading/language arts NAEP performance above the national average for a brief time from 2000 to 2003 and then a steady decline to below the national average among 4th and 8th graders since 2005. NAEP math performance increased steadily in the late 1990s, rose above the national average and has remained slightly above the national average since 2000. The state has increased graduation rates for most subgroups since 2006. Discussion of policies and practices for determining the participation of English language learners and students with disabilities in NAEP and/or accommodations for these student subgroups is lacking. Also lacking are college enrollment and college credit accumulation rates for subgroups under ESEA.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

## B. Standards and Assessments

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
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<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The application contains ample evidence that the state is committed to working with the Common Core Standards Initiative consortium of 48 states and its Accountability and Curriculum Reform Effort (ACRE) to revise essential standards to be internationally benchmarked and adopted in the state. The plan includes valuable reading standards for college and career readiness embedded within STEM and other content areas. The state's Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing and Accountability laid the ground work for 21st century standards' adoption in 2006. The state's mathematics standards team is conducting research about math learning trajectories to inform math standards. Writing standards are also a strength of the common standards under consideration for adoption. The consortium used appropriate international frameworks and reviewed individual countries' standards to inform making decisions about their common standards. The application provides a timeline for common core adoption that started in August 2009 and is scheduled to be completed in August 2010 with a well-coordinated roll out through the professional development plan under this proposal that is integrated with the ACRE project. The writing team for the math standards will convene in spring 2010. There is opportunity for public comment and stakeholder review of the standards during spring 2010.</p>				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The state included evidence of its approved resolution in January 2010 demonstrating its commitment to working with other states on developing formative, benchmark, diagnostic and summative assessments based on the new common core standards. The state already is involved in several assessment consortia to establish common assessments aligned to the new standards, which illustrates depth and breadth of their commitment to assessment.</p>				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The state has a roll out plan consisting of four goals for transitioning to its new standards. The state is adopting the common standards in English language arts/reading/writing and math from the consortium of states as well as working through its ACRE Project to update all of its standards and assessments K-12 to be internationally benchmarked and aligned for college and career readiness. The plan includes extensive professional development for educators aimed at ensuring alignment of teaching with new standards. The plan is less strong with regard to explaining how it will prepare teachers to formatively assess core content learning related to the new standards. The plan includes a description of its summative assessment plan, which is beyond the scope of this award program. There is no baseline available to evaluate the appropriateness of the targeted yearly +8% increase in teacher pay. However, the target appears low for a state with 100% LEA support for adoption of the new standards.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>65</b>	

### C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
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<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The application indicates that the state is in the initial process of implementing an integrated statewide longitudinal data system called CEDARS through another USDOE grant. Currently elements of the America COMPETES Act are housed in several data systems in the state. The application indicates elements 5, 8, 9 and 12 are not yet fully implemented in a centralized manner and it is not clear how the remaining eight elements are actually implemented through an integrated interface that allows for easy access by LEAs and other stakeholders. The application mentions another grant proposal that is not yet awarded to support developing interoperability of the 12 elements. The application indicates that the state also needs several other grants to support its ability to fully implement a statewide longitudinal data system.</p>				
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b> <p>The application is not clear enough to confidently identify all of the elements that are in place. After the state team presentation, it appears that elements 1, 8, 10, and 12 are not in place. This does not change the original score. The state team did say clearly that while many elements exist in the state, the bridges between some elements (or interoperability) are not all in place.</p>				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The state is still building its longitudinal data system and there are no clear deadlines for its full implementation and accessibility to key stakeholders at the LEA level. The application mentions fall 2010 access for LEAs to some data tools that will provide reports through use of CEDARS' business intelligence tools. However, the application lacks any description of how the functions or report generated by CEDARS' business intelligence tools will inform and engage stakeholders.</p>				
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>This section of the application describes a robust three-part assessment method grounded in appropriate literature and research on assessment for learning. The assessment methods address the need for ongoing formative assessment, cognitive diagnostic assessment and curriculum progress monitoring at the LEA level. The state proposes to build this centralized student assessment system that will be accessible to LEAs through a dashboard interface. There is little description of how these assessment data relate to CEDARS data. Some timelines given in the application appear too short for designing and developing such a complex assessment system. The short pilot period for the daily assessments and curriculum monitoring tools is immediately followed by full implementation without any time allotted for evaluation and feedback to inform the design and quality controls for this complex assessment data system. A specific plan for making data available to researchers is not described.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	

#### D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The application has documentation of state legal provisions that allow several alternative routes to licensure. Alternative routes to licensure are mostly reserved for high-need or shortage areas. There is also</p>				



a provision for an alternate administrator preparation program housed in a LEA. All programs need to be approved by the State Board of Education. There currently are several alternative routes to licensure to teach in North Carolina. These are non-degree programs at institutions of higher education, regional alternative licensing centers that approve plans of study through multiple colleges and/or universities, and LEA-based programs that partner with college providers. There is a policy supporting alternative programs for administrators which can be run by LEAs with state board of education approval. Direct licensure is available under limited circumstances. Ultimately, initial alternative licensure carries additional requirements involving college and/or university coursework or LEA programs that partner with established institutions of higher education or the regional centers. Provisions were made in August 2009 allowing online coursework to count toward licensure. Descriptions of some of the alternative programs are vague. The state has a 10-point plan for identifying and addressing shortages since 2006. Monitoring, evaluating and identifying shortages is systematic. Multiple initiatives are in place for preparing teachers and principals to fill shortage areas including incentives based on student performance and attainment of advanced credentials. The total number of teachers and principals licensed from each type of program in the state is not clear, which indicates a monitoring process is not fully implemented.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	14	14	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	8	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	24	24	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state has a clear approach to measuring student growth using adequate yearly progress and new measures such as the SAS Education Value-Added Assessment System that has predictive values intended for informing placement decisions and tracking teacher effectiveness. There are monetary incentive bonuses for licensed staff in schools that meet expected growth rates. Recently the state is piloting various approaches that link incentives to individual teachers including those in low-performing districts. The validity of the SAS system is not verified in the application. The state has established use of a teacher evaluation multi-category evaluation rubric based on observation, evaluator-teacher consultations, and artifact analysis with a developmental scale. The rubrics and reporting methods are comprehensive including goal-setting for future professional growth. Direct student data are not yet included. The principal evaluation method is self-assessment which is not a rigorous evaluation method; however it does involve review of artifacts and consultation with the superintendent. The state has plans to proceed in a thoughtful manner to develop an efficient way to incorporate student growth measures into educator evaluations. North Carolina state board of education has a resolution to support this new effort. They described a detailed and well-thought out plan to study a valid and reliable way to incorporate student growth into educator evaluation methods. The study will be completed in 2014 along with validity and reliability results for new teacher evaluation methods. It does not mention plans to study or incorporate new student growth into principal evaluation methods. The teacher and principal evaluation methods in place are currently used to inform decisions in all four target areas for this grant program. The methods will be expanded to include recommendations for professional development tools and resources and a rigorous removal process for ineffective teachers and principals.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	15	



(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	5	5	
<b>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The application clearly states that North Carolina does not have equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals in high-poverty and high-minority schools. The state has reviewed the results of its equity plan dated 2006 and research-based best practices. It found problems with retention of high quality educators in high-poverty and high-minority schools. It also found that effectiveness is context specific. The state has a six-point plan for address the current equity problem. The plan involves special programs to recruit, prepare and retaining effective teachers and principals already working in these settings while aggressively using a strategic staffing approach to add more high-quality educators to build sustainable capacity within context specific settings. The plan proposes to scale up Regional Leadership Academies (RLAs) that will work with LEAs to accomplish its targets through a variety of professional development activities aligned to research-based training processes such as nationwide recruitment efforts, use of LEA-higher education partnerships, online courses, and context-specific teacher preparation (to address unique needs of diverse populations) and professional learning communities. The application presents is a capacity building plan for existing initiatives that could be scaled up. The state's Teach for America outcomes have been successful in high-need and specialty areas. The application clearly articulates targets for increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers in math and science, but does not show targets for special education and language instruction. It does not explain how new teachers will be supported with specific opportunities for professional learning in math and science learning trajectories or special education. Instead the application describes generic measures such as an emphasis on recruiting strategies, incentives for tuition and course materials, targeted induction programs which do not fully address the needs for developing equitable capacity for effective STEM and specialty area teachers.</p>				
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	8	8	
<b>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The state plans to improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs through expansion of its ABC accountability system described under section D2. The application proposes to include targeted assessments about impacts of a variety of programs and routes to teacher and principal licensure on student achievement. The value-added from the proposed new assessments is not clear in the performance measures with a baseline of 100% of existing public teacher and principal preparation programs already providing public access to data on the achievement and growth of graduates' K-12 students. The plans and targets for expansion are not clearly articulated (TBA) in the application for independent teacher and principal preparation programs.</p>				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	17	10	
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The application has a plan to launch a comprehensive Professional Development Initiative (PDI) to build LEAs' capacity to provide effective professional development. This plan is designed to incorporate research-based practices related to professional growth. It includes ongoing professional development needs assessment, resources including online access, developing a cadre of coaches and mentors from among highly effective educators in the state including 14,000 national board certified teachers, and job-embedded professional learning communities. The PDI is designed to be sustained beyond the grant award which is targeted at developing capacity for implementing the plan. Although the plan mentions its existing STEM-related programs at six regional centers, the capacity of those centers to build an effective and widespread STEM-related teaching workforce is not evident. This weakness is also apparent in the lack of evaluation questions about the impacts of professional development directly linked to changes in content area teaching practices that correlate with increases in student achievement in specific core content and specialty areas.</p>				
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				



During the state team presentation, the team did not address their declining reading achievement. The information provided in the application shows that the state's reading has been trending downward over multiple years and has declined below the nationwide average. Our nation's reading performance has also declined below other developed countries on international measures. The application does not demonstrate that it has identified the source or causes of declines in reading. The team explained that it does have a number of professional development initiatives in reading. However, evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of its professional development with regard to student achievement in reading was not provided. The effectiveness of professional development in building teacher expertise to address its declining student achievement in reading is unknown.

Total	138	111	104	
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### E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The application adequately demonstrates state board of education's legal authority to intervene in schools and LEAs with corrective action status. There are documented cases of the state successfully exercising this authority.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	30	30	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25	25	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The application clearly identifies the lowest-achieving schools in the state based on performance composites and graduation rates for the past three school years. It also lists the lowest 5% of LEAs. The application clearly describes the state's history of effort and performance on school turnaround starting in 2004-05. It uses all four school intervention models but the major of schools use the transformation model. The lessons learned from its intervention efforts so far are documented but there are no annual targets identified in the performance measure chart. The state's plan is to intervene through needs assessment, partnerships, planning and monitoring at the district level using one of the four models. Ten of the existing restart schools opened in 2007 have a STEM focus. The effectiveness of these STEM schools is not clear. The state plans to develop STEM anchor schools and a cluster network to build capacity within the state to enhance student choice and access to STEM preparation. It will incorporate lessons learned from the STEM network into low-achieving school interventions. The plan's targets and its evaluation measures lack attention to wide-spread impacts from STEM anchor schools and networks with regard to building equitable distribution capacity in the state for students to enter STEM-related educational and career preparations programs.				
Total	50	40	40	

### F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The application provides budget evidence showing that education funding was increased in 2009 and was greater than the percent of total revenues used to support education in the previous fiscal year. The state uses 26 formulas to determine equitable distribution of state school funds and it has a fund to provide additional support to districts in high-poverty areas. The application shows that its K-12 public school system's actual expenditures decreased dramatically by more than 70% in 2008-09 compared with 2007-08 expenditures. The application also shows a dramatic increase in funding to UNC higher education in 2008-09. The rationale for these shifts in educational funding is not explained.</p>				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>The state does have a charter school law which limited the total number of charter schools to 3.8% of the total number of school in the state. There are currently 96 charter schools. The state board of education is the governing body able to approve applications for charter schools in the state. The SBE in North Carolina created an Office of Charter Schools (OCS) dedicated to supporting and monitoring these schools in the state. Accountability and authorization appears not to be described in legal term but rather SBE policy. Charter school application status is documented since 1997-98. The state has a general statute that provides for charter schools to receive the same funds for each student as do regular public schools. Funds, by law, come from the school district in which the student resides. The process for monitoring the distribution of equitable funds is not clear. The average dollar amount per student for charter schools is provided in the application but there is no comparable dollar amount for public school students. The state by general statute does not impose stricter facility-related requirements on charter schools than it does on regular public schools. Charter schools can use their funds for facilities available and not in use by the local district. There are no special state funds for charter school facilities which operate under the same requirements as regular public schools. There is no clear evidence that the state provides chart schools with assistance in facilities acquisition. The application describes innovative and autonomous public school models operating in the state. It has plans for the newly proposed STEM-focused high schools that are intended to be innovative and autonomous in targeting students in high-need workforce areas. The percent of innovative school approaches designated for turnaround interventions is unknown.</p>				
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> <p>This section of the application describes additional programs and additional laws implemented within the state to support conditions favorable to education reform and innovations. The evidence demonstrating impacts from these additional programs on student achievement are minimal in this section, which makes it difficult to determine if there has been increases in student learning directly from or correlated with these efforts to create reform conditions.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	

### Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				



The state already offers a variety of STEM-related programs and has gathered the support of a variety of credible STEM-capable community partners for its STEM programs that are already established in the state. However, there is not a strong plan for systemic capacity-building or scaling up rigorous STEM learning opportunities throughout the state. The applicant's STEM plan is under the turnaround intervention called the New School Model targeting low achieving LEAs and struggling schools. The performance measure target for the New School Model anchor schools is only 14 schools by 2014. The performance measure target for the proposed STEM Affinity Cluster Networks is a total of 9. The description of Affinity Cluster Networks does not explain the percent of schools or students in the state that will have opportunities to be prepared for STEM studies and careers through these networks. The cluster network design does not explain how it will provide for equitable geographical distribution of STEM-related learning opportunities beyond struggling schools. The proposed plan does not include convincing evidence about the effectiveness of its existing STEM programs, nor does it report lessons learned from its existing STEM programs.

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The state team's answer to a question did not clarify how much capacity-building and equitable distribution for increases in STEM learning is targeted under this funding proposal. The reviewer is also concerned about the lack of letters of support from community partners who have strong STEM expertise in the work world. The partnerships cited in the proposal appear to be university-based which is aligned with the state's focus on getting students into college. This focus on LEA and university partnerships for STEM is a strong point of their STEM plan. There is some data presented about effectiveness of various programs and STEM AP scores that are higher than national averages. The weakness is details about linkages or partnerships to real world expertise in STEM for career development at all levels of STEM-related careers, not just the high end. Another weakness is the technology component. The STEM standard course of study cites passing a computer skills assessment as the technology graduation component. This does not appear to meet the rigorous course of study criterion. Our students need to be prepared to compete globally, for example, with high schools in India that require a full year of computer science as a graduation requirement.

Total	15	0	0	
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The applicant demonstrates a history of initiatives in the four educational reform areas. The state has provided evidence of strong support and participation among its LEAs for the proposed scope of work to continue to conduct its educational reform efforts. Strengths of the proposal are the process approach to professional development and plans for strengthening measuring of teachers' and principals' effectiveness. The applicant also has strong plans for designing and implementing assessment and data systems to support teachers and principals in making instructional decisions. The timelines for creating and implementing these assessment and data systems appear overly ambitious, however. The applicant's track record of raising student achievement is mixed. Since 2005, student achievement has been declining in reading. Math increases are slight. Proposed use of funds for digital resources is not well-aligned to core content standards. The application gives little attention to subgroups such as English language learners and special education students. These are issues that need to be addressed in this application.



<b>Total</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>378</b>		